

ABOUT SARAH PALIN

I am a resident of Wasilla, Alaska. I have known Sarah since 1992. Everyone here knows Sarah, so it is nothing special to say we are on a first-name basis. Our children have attended the same schools. Her father was my child's favorite substitute teacher. I also am on a first name basis with her parents and mother-in-law.. I attended more City Council meetings during her administration than about 99% of the residents of the city.

She is enormously popular; in every way she's like the most popular girl in middle school. Even men who think she is a poor choice and won't vote for her can't quit smiling when talking about her because she is a "babe".

It is astonishing and almost scary how well she can keep a secret. She kept her most recent pregnancy a secret from her children and parents for seven months.

She is "pro-life". She recently gave birth to a baby with Down syndrome . There is no cover-up involved, here; Trig is her baby.

She is energetic and hardworking. She regularly worked out at the gym.

She is savvy. She doesn't take positions; she just "puts things out there" and if they prove to be popular, then she takes credit.

Her husband works a union job on the North Slope for BP and is a champion snowmobile racer. Todd Palin's kind of job is highly sought-after because of the schedule and high pay. He arranges his work schedule so he can fish for salmon in Bristol Bay for a month or so in summer, but by no stretch of the imagination is fishing their major source of income. Nor has her life-style ever been anything like that of native Alaskans.

Sarah and her whole family are avid hunters.

She's smart.

Her experience is as mayor of a city with a population of about 5,000 (at the time), and less than 2 years as governor of a state with about 670,000 residents.

During her mayoral administration most of the actual work of running this small city was turned over to an administrator. She had been pushed to hire this administrator by party power-brokers after she had gotten herself into some trouble over precipitous firings which had given rise to a recall campaign.

Sarah campaigned in Wasilla as a "fiscal conservative". During her 6 years as Mayor, she increased general government expenditures by over 33%. During those same 6 years the amount of taxes collected by the City increased by 38%. This was during a period of low inflation (1996-2002). She reduced progressive property taxes and increased a regressive sales tax which taxed even food. The tax cuts that she promoted benefited large corporate property owners way more than they benefited residents.

The huge increases in tax revenues during her mayoral administration weren't enough to fund everything on her wish list though, borrowed money was needed, too. She inherited a city with zero debt, but left it with indebtedness of over \$22 million. What did Mayor Palin encourage the voters to borrow money for? Was it the infrastructure that she said she supported? The sewage treatment plant that the city lacked? or a new library? No. \$1m for a park. \$15m-plus for construction of a multi-use sports complex which she rushed through to build on a piece of property that the City didn't even have clear title to, that was still in litigation 7 yrs later--to the delight of the lawyers involved! The sports complex itself is a nice addition to the community but a huge money pit, not the profit-generator she claimed it would be. She also supported bonds for \$5.5m for road projects that could have been done in 5-7 yrs without any borrowing.

While Mayor, City Hall was extensively remodeled and her office redecorated more than once.

These are small numbers, but Wasilla is a very small city.

As an oil producer, the high price of oil has created a budget surplus in Alaska. Rather than invest this surplus in technology that will make us energy independent and increase efficiency, as Governor she proposed distribution of this surplus to every individual in the state.

In this time of record state revenues and budget surpluses, she recommended that the state borrow/bond for road projects, even while she proposed distribution of surplus state revenues: spend today's surplus, borrow for needs.

She's not very tolerant of divergent opinions or open to outside ideas or compromise. As Mayor, she fought ideas that weren't generated by her or her staff. Ideas weren't evaluated on their merits, but on the basis of who proposed them.

While Sarah was Mayor of Wasilla she tried to fire our highly respected City Librarian because the Librarian refused to consider removing from the library some books that Sarah wanted removed. City residents rallied to the defense of the City Librarian and against Palin's attempt at out-and-out censorship, so Palin backed down and withdrew her termination letter. People who fought her attempt to oust the Librarian are on her enemies list to this day.

Sarah complained about the "old boy's club" when she first ran for Mayor, so what did she bring Wasilla? A new set of "old boys". Palin fired most of the experienced staff she inherited. At the City and as Governor she hired or elevated new, inexperienced, obscure people, creating a staff totally dependent on her for their jobs and eternally grateful and fiercely loyal--loyal to the point of abusing their power to further her personal agenda, as she has acknowledged happened in the case of pressuring the State's top cop (see below).

As Mayor, Sarah fired Wasilla's Police Chief because he "intimidated" her, she told the press. As Governor, her recent firing of Alaska's top cop has the ring of familiarity about it. He served at her pleasure and she had every legal right to fire him, but it's pretty clear that an important factor in her decision to fire him was because he wouldn't fire her sister's ex-husband, a State Trooper.. Under investigation for abuse of power, she has had to admit that more than 2 dozen contacts were made between her staff and family to the person that she later fired, pressuring him to fire her ex-brother-in-law. She tried to replace the man she fired with a man who she knew had been reprimanded for sexual harassment; when this caused a public furor, she withdrew her support.

She has bitten the hand of every person who extended theirs to her in help. The City Council person who personally escorted her around town introducing her to voters when she first ran for Wasilla City Council became one of her first targets when she was later elected Mayor. She abruptly fired her loyal City Administrator; even people who didn't like the guy were stunned by this ruthlessness.

Fear of retribution has kept all of these people from saying anything publicly about her.

When then-Governor Murkowski was handing out political plums, Sarah got the best, Chair of the Alaska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission: one of the few jobs not in Juneau and one of the best paid. She had no background in oil & gas issues. Within months of scoring this great job which paid \$122,400/yr, she was criticizing her pay as too high in the press . I was told that she hated that job: the commute, the structured hours, the work. Sarah became aware that a member of this Commission (who was also the State Chair of the Republican Party) engaged in unethical behavior on the job. In a gutsy move which some undoubtedly cautioned her could be political suicide, Sarah solved all her problems in one fell swoop: got out of the job she hated and garnered gobs of media attention as the patron saint of ethics and as a gutsy fighter against the "old boys' club" when she dramatically quit, exposing this man's ethics violations (for which he was fined).

As Mayor, she had her hand stuck out as far as anyone for pork from Senator Ted Stevens. Lately, she has castigated his pork-barrel politics and publicly humiliated him. She only opposed the "bridge to nowhere" after it became clear that it would be unwise not to.

As Governor, she gave the Legislature no direction and budget guidelines, then made a big grandstand display of line-item vetoing projects, calling them pork. Public outcry and further legislative action restored most of these projects--which had been vetoed simply because she was not aware of their importance--but with the unobservant she had gained a reputation as "anti-pork".

She is solidly Republican: no political maverick. The State party leaders hate her because she has bit them in the back and humiliated them. Other members of the party object to her self-description as a fiscal conservative.

Around Wasilla there are people who went to high school with Sarah. They call her "Sarah Barracuda" because of her unbridled ambition and predatory ruthlessness.. Before she became so powerful, very ugly stories circulated around town about shenanigans she pulled to be made point guard on the high school basketball team. When Sarah's mother-in-law, a highly respected member of the community and experienced manager, ran for Mayor, Sarah refused to endorse her.

As Governor, she stepped outside of the box and put together of package of legislation known as "AGIA" that forced the oil companies to march to the beat of her drum.

Like most Alaskans, she favors drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. She has questioned if the loss of sea ice is linked to global warming. She campaigned "as a private citizen" against a state initiative that would have either a) protected salmon streams from pollution from mines, or b) tied up in the courts all mining in the state (depending on who you listen to). She has pushed the State's lawsuit against the Dept. of the Interior's decision to list polar bears as threatened species.

McCain is the oldest person to ever run for President; Sarah will be a heartbeat away from being President.

There has to be literally millions of Americans who are more knowledgeable and experienced than she..

However, there's a lot of people who have underestimated her and are regretting it.

CLAIM VS FACT

("Hockey mom": true for a few years

("PTA mom": true years ago when her first-born was in elementary school, not since

("NRA supporter": absolutely true

(social conservative: mixed. Opposes gay marriage, BUT vetoed a bill that would have denied benefits to employees in same-sex relationships (said she did this because it was unconstitutional).

(pro-creationism: mixed. Supports it, BUT did nothing as Governor to promote it.

("Pro-life": mixed. Knowingly gave birth to a Down's syndrome baby BUT declined to call a special legislative session on some pro-life legislation

("Experienced": Some high schools have more students than Wasilla has residents. Many cities have more residents than the state of Alaska. No legislative experience other than City Council. Little hands-on supervisory or managerial experience; needed help of a city administrator to run town of about 5,000.

(political maverick: not at all

(gutsy: absolutely!

(open & transparent: ??? Good at keeping secrets. Not good at explaining

actions.

(has a developed philosophy of public policy: no

("a Greenie": no. Turned Wasilla into a wasteland of big box stores and disconnected parking lots. Is pro-drilling off-shore and in ANWR.

(fiscal conservative: not by my definition!

(pro-infrastructure: No. Promoted a sports complex and park in a city without a sewage treatment plant or storm drainage system. Built streets to early 20th century standards.

(pro-tax relief: Lowered taxes for businesses, increased tax burden on residents

(pro-small government: No. Oversaw greatest expansion of city government in Wasilla's history.

(pro-labor/pro-union. No. Just because her husband works union doesn't make her pro-labor. I have seen nothing to support any claim that she is pro-labor/pro-union.

WHY AM I WRITING THIS?

First, I have long believed in the importance of being an informed voter. I am a voter registrar. For 10 years I put on student voting programs in the schools. If you google my name (Anne Kilkenny + Alaska), you will find references to my participation in local government, education, and PTA/parent organizations.

Secondly, I've always operated in the belief that "Bad things happen when good people stay silent". Few people know as much as I do because few have gone to as many City Council meetings.

Third, I am just a housewife. I don't have a job she can bump me out of. I don't belong to any organization that she can hurt. But, I am no fool; she is immensely popular here, and it is likely that this will cost me somehow in the future: that's life.

Fourth, she has hated me since back in 1996, when I was one of the 100 or so people who rallied to support the City Librarian against Sarah's attempt at censorship.

Fifth, I looked around and realized that everybody else was afraid to say anything because they were somehow vulnerable.

CAVEATS

I am not a statistician. I developed the numbers for the increase in spending & taxation 2 years ago (when Palin was running for Governor)

from information supplied to me by the Finance Director of the City of Wasilla, and I can't recall exactly what I adjusted for: did I adjust for inflation? for population increases? Right now, it is impossible for a private person to get any info out of City Hall--they are swamped. So I can't verify my numbers.

You may have noticed that there are various numbers circulating for the population of Wasilla, ranging from my "about 5,000", up to 9,000. The day Palin's selection was announced a city official told me that the current population is about 7,000. The official 2000 census count was 5,460. I have used about 5,000 because Palin was Mayor from 1996 to 2002, and the city was growing rapidly in the mid-90's.